of art, collectors pieces and antiques is valued at Rs. 2026.09 crore in 2005-06, Rs. 1951.71 crore in 2006-07 and Rs. 124.83 crore in April, 07. This does not indicate any sudden increase in demand of artifacts in foreign countries.

Introduction of Integrated Food Law

1654. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that our exports have touched a record of Rs. 4,40,000 crores in 2005-06;

(b) whether Government is likely to introduce an Integrated Food Law to help in meeting requirements of International trade and make Indian farm products globally competitive and whether the Government is bringing out a Legislation to set up a single line of command from the present multilevel control;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the details of various steps; already taken, specially in the agricultural and food processing field to produce standard export oriented quality to meet International standards?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) Yes Sir. The total exports of the year 2005-06 were Rs. 4,56,417.88 crores. The agriculture and allied product exports were Rs. 31,960.37 crores during 2005-06.

(b) to (d) The Food Safety and Standards Act 2006 has been enacted to consolidate the laws relating to food and to establish the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India for laying down science based standards for food and food products and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import etc. The objective is to reduce multiplicity of authority and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. India is also a member of Codex Alimentarius Commission, an international body created by FAO & WHO to develop food standards, guidelines and related issues such as code of practices etc., to ensure food safety in agriculture exports and ensure fair trade practices in the food trade.

Steps to provide stability to trade

1655. DR. V. MAITREYAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the trade deficit is increasing due to heavy import bills;

(b) if so, the present level of trade deficit during the current financial year;

(c) what steps are being taken by the Government to provide stability to trade both inland and overseas; and

(d) what are the imported items which have an adverse effect on trade in India and the steps taken to contain such imports to protect the local industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) The increase in trade deficit during the recent years has been due to the exports growing at a lower rate than that of imports. During 2007-08 (April-October), while total value of exports were of the order of US$ 85583.30 million, the total value of imports were US$ 129989.72 million, resulting in a trade deficit of US $44406.42 million.

(c) and (d) The major reasons for increase in trade deficit can be attributed to the increase in the import of capital goods and raw-materials due to high growth rates of the economy and also increase in the prices of petroleum products. While it is the endeavour of the Government to promote exports through initiatives in accordance with the provisions under the Foreign Trade Policy (2004-09) and its Annual Supplements, suitable mechanism have also been put in place for monitoring the imports of sensitive items and to safeguard the interest of the domestic producers, by resorting to various WTO compatible measures, which include calibration of applied tariffs within bound tariffs, anti-dumping and safeguard action and imposition of countervailing duties etc.

No objection of local population for SEZs

1656. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has decided to implement SEZs only if local population has no objection;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) how many proposals already approved will have to seek no objection from local population; and

(d) whether Government will obtain 'no objection' or prospective proposer will have to do so?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (d) The Board of Approval only considers those proposals, which have been duly recommended by the respective State Governments. In pursuance of the decisions taken by the Empowered Group of Ministers (EGOM), the State Governments have been informed on 15th June 2007 that the Board of Approval will not approve any SEZs where the State Governments have carried out or propose to carry out compulsory acquisition of land for such SEZs after 5th April, 2007. The Ministry of Rural Development has also come out with a new National Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy, 2007.

Export of drugs

1657. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an Export Promotion Cell has been functioning to boost pharmaceutical exports;